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February 13, 2007

ROCKFORD WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, together with TRACEY THANOS, Acting Special Agent-In-Charge, Office of Criminal Investigations, Social Security Administration, today announced:

KERRIE M. MILLER, age 29, (DOB: 05/12/1977), 6165 Wynbrook Drive, Rockford, Illinois, pled guilty today in federal court in Rockford to defrauding the Social Security Administration of Supplemental Security Income ("SSI"). The SSI program is a federal welfare program administered by the Social Security Administration ("SSA") which provides benefits to elderly, blind, or disabled individuals whose income and resources are below specified levels.

In determining eligibility for benefits, the SSA looks at several factors including the individual's income, resources, and living arrangements. In order to correctly assess a recipient's eligibility for benefits, the SSA needs to obtain accurate and current information regarding the recipient. Therefore, recipients and representative payees are required to provide accurate and complete information in initial applications for benefits as well as to report to the SSA any changes in the recipients' circumstances which would affect the recipient's ongoing eligibility for benefits.

In pleading guilty today, Miller admitted that on November 14, 2003, she made false statements to the Social Security Administration which were relied upon to determine eligibility for benefits for two of her children. According to the plea agreement, Miller, who was married in September 2002, admitted that on November 14, 2003, she falsely stated to the SSA that she was not married. In addition, Miller admitted to failing to include her husband as a member of her household and failing to report his income. As stated in the plea agreement, Miller again knowingly made false statements to the SSA on a January 16, 2004, and on December 16, 2004, about her marital status, the members of her household, and the income of her household members, which she knew would be used by the SSA in determining SSI benefits for two of her children. Miller admitted that as a result of her false statements to the SSA between November 2003 and March 2006, she fraudulently obtained approximately \$26,495.04 in SSI benefits on behalf of her two sons.

Sentencing for Miller has been scheduled for May 4, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. Miller faces a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison without the possibility of parole, followed by 2 to 3 years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the federal Sentencing Guidelines and the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the Social Security Administration, and is being prosecuted in United States District Court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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